



**Midlands State University**

Established 2000

*Our Hands, Our Minds, Our Destiny*

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED EDUCATION**

***RESEARCH TITLE***

A STUDY OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS  
AT MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY, IN GWERU, URBAN DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE.

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**APPROVAL FORM**

The undersigned certify that they read and recommended to the Midlands State University for acceptance, a research project entitled: **a study of the challenges faced by the Visually Impaired Students at Midlands State University, in Gweru, Urban District, Zimbabwe.**

This document is submitted by **Aina Phillipus** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Education Honors Degree in Management of Business.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out if visually impaired students at Midlands State University are facing similar challenges as students in Namibia at Secondary schools in their learning environments. The researcher intended to find solutions to the problems that are faced by the visually impaired students at Midlands State University. The research employed qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures through the use of triangulation of instruments: the observation, interviews and questionnaires. The research targeted the population of twenty **20** participants in the university .The sample consisted of, four **4**visually impaired students, six **6** workers at the DRC and ten **10**lecturers teaching visually impaired students. The population of visually impaired students and workers at the DRC are in small numbers hence the researcher intended to use the whole group as a sample and use purposive sampling for the lecturers teaching visually impaired students. The research was guided by the descriptive survey design.100% of the sample participated in the study, and responded to the research questions provided. The evidence pointed to the fact that the disabled students (VIS) at Midlands State University are the most disadvantaged students with numerous challenges which contributed to their academic performance. The findings also suggested that the University's infrastructure was blindly built without thinking about the disabled students' safety and accessibility issues. The researcher also concluded that since there are inadequate learning human, capitals, and material resources such as specialist instructors and sport trainers, textbooks, Braille and Perkins machines, large printers, CCTV, and the lack of proper sport facilities for the VIS were also sadly missing. It is recommended that the University should offer short courses or in-service training on how to make the classrooms for inclusive classes cater for the special needs education particularly to lecturers who should be educated, through adaptations of teaching and learning environments.

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## DEDICATION

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## ACRONYMS

MSU-Midlands State University

CDC-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

DRC-Disability Resources Centre

DASS-Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies

NASCOH- National Association of Societies for the Care of Handicapped

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

VIS- Visual Impaired Students

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# CHAPTER ONE

## THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

### 1.0 Introduction

This research intended to investigate the challenges faced by the visually impaired students at Midlands State University in Gweru during their learning periods. The purpose of the study is to find out ways which can be implemented to facilitate the viable learning of visually impaired students so that they can benefit from formal lectures. This chapter looked at the background of the study, statement of the problem, key research questions, and the importance of the study, the purpose of the study, delimitations and limitations.

### 1.1 Backgrounds to the Study

Coupled with experience and exposure during the work-related year, the researcher encountered problems of poor academic performance of learners with visual impairment in Namibia while teaching at a secondary school. Likewise, as the student has moved back to finish her studies in Zimbabwe she got moved with the experience she got exposed to. Thus the study intended to use the little experience she got to analyze challenges that may also be facing fellow students with the same challenge at Midlands State University. The Education Act of 1998, implemented in 2001 states that,

*“every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education and section (b) states that no child in Zimbabwe shall be discriminated against by the imposition of onerous terms and condition in regard to admission to any school ,on the grounds of his race ,tribe , place of origin , national, or ethnic origin , political opinion ,color ,creed ,or gender, (pg 4.)*

Informed by the Act, the Midlands State University enrolled all students in their system without discrimination despite their specific ailments and disability circumstances. This study is forecasting on the extent of the challenges faced by the visually impaired students that is, low vision or blind in their inclusion in regular classes. Scholl (1986) allude to visual impairment as the utilitarian constraint of the eye or eyes or the vision system. That could be because of eye harm, disappointment of the mind to get and read the visual prompts sent to it by the eyes.

However according to Webster and Roe (1998) the level of hindrance vary from low vision to aggregate loss of sight which alluded to as 'blind'. individuals who fall in classification of "blind" rely on upon physical, sound-related and other tangible inputs other than sight as a mean of learning. Therefore, every student requires singular adjustment to instructional practice and materials to learn viably.

Zimbabwean researchers have also tried to address the challenges and solutions in dealing with visually impaired students for example, Chinyoka (2011) who postulated that students with disability, particularly the visually impaired had always struggled to cope with the learning environment at higher and tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. This same view was supported by Gondo and Gondo (2013) who said that the visually impaired understudies are being taken into different programmes accessible. However, despite everything they confront difficulties of incorporation to general classes in education. However, this study aims to advocate for an even ground where there are limited hindrances parceled in the teaching and learning of visually impaired students.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The issue of inclusion, psychologically and socially poses problems related to the learning of the visually impaired students. There is lack of specialized equipment and teaching staff necessary for learning and teaching of disadvantaged visually impaired students this resulted in most of the students performing poorly or getting lower grades. Among the related studies on students with visual impairment that have been carried out in different settings were from, Chinyoka (2011) which showed the battles confronted by the visually impaired in their education in Zimbabwe. All things considered, the absence of viable learner friendly environment have a tendency to repress the best possible learning and teaching of visually impaired students this has led to the attainment of lower grades.

## **1.3. Key Research Question**

**1.3.0** How has the Midlands State University addressed the challenges faced by the visually impaired students in their studies?

## **1.4 Sub-Questions**

1.4.1 How can the University strengthen the teaching facilities and resources for the Visually Impaired Students?

1.4.2 To what extent does the University provide standard educational equipment for the visually impaired students at Midlands State University?

1.4.3. How effective are the teaching strategies commonly used to address the needs of students with special need in regular class?

## **1.5 The Importance of the Study**

1.5.1 The study is important to the researcher in that, it is a learning exercise which allows her to learn the necessary research skills for use in future

1.5.2 The study will contribute to the knowledge and understanding on how to work with visually impaired students.

1.5.3 The study will offer an opportunity to demonstrate solutions that can be used for the advancement of the visually impaired students in teaching and learning.

1.5.4 The study will help policy makers to bring about intervention strategies to address the plight of the visually impaired students.

## **1.6 Purpose of the Study**

Coupled with experience and exposure during the work-related year, the researcher encountered problems of poor academic performance of learners with visual impairment in Namibia while teaching at a secondary school. Thus, the researcher intends to find out if visually impaired students at Midlands State University are facing similar challenges as students in Namibia at Secondary school. The researcher will also attempt to find solutions to the problems that are faced by the visually impaired students at Midlands State University.

## **1.7 Delimitations of the Study**

- The research focused on the problems of teaching and learning involving visually impaired students.
- The research was conducted at Midlands State University in Gweru, urban district, Zimbabwe.

- The participants comprised the visually impaired students, lecturers as well as workers at the Disability Resources Centre (DRC).

### **1.8 Limitations**

The confidentiality to the participants was a crucial challenge as it posed sensitive perceptions during interview sessions. They wanted to maintain their status confidential and anonymity, thus some refused to have their voices recorded on recording devices. On top of that the researcher was a full-time student, balancing the time for lectures and data collection was a major concern, but the students made use of the free periods to administer the instruments effectively.

### **1.9 Definition of Key Terms**

- Visual impairment – a condition when the eyesight cannot be corrected to a “normal level”. It is the functional limitation of the eye or eyes or the vision system, **(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-CDC, 2013)**
- Inclusion -is defined as the state or a process of addressing and responding positively to the diversities that exists among the students, through modifying and changing the education systems, to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, socio-emotional, and intellectual and other types of conditions, **(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO, 2005).**

## **1.10Chapter Summary**

This chapter focused on the introduction of the topic, the background, the statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the studies, as well the definition of the terms. The next chapter will shell out to the analysis of related literature on the subject of ‘challenges faced by the visually impaired students learning in inclusion education/class.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter focused on opinions and views of related literature on challenges faced by the visual impairment students and how they are being addressed. It includes ideas from related studies that were conducted in different countries examples Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, United State of America and many more .The chapter included sub-topics related to the challenges faced by the visually impaired students.

#### **2.1 The Nature of Visual Impairment**

Chinyoka, (2011:7) asserts that “visual impairment is classified into two major groups that is totally blind and partially sighted or low vision”. He further defined partially sighted as the person with visual acuity greater than 20/70 in the better eye with correction. Webster and Roe (1998) concurred that, the degree of impairment differs from low vision to total loss of sight which is referred to as ‘blind’. People who fall in the category of “blind “depend on physical , auditory and other sensory inputs other than sight as a mean of learning .Therefore each student requires individual adaptations to instructional practice and materials to learn effectively. According to O’Keefe (1999:9), visual impairments are the reduced vision caused by Eye Diseases, Accidents or Eye conditions present from birth.

Mushome, Avhasei and Monobe (2013:7) exerts that the term visual impairment covers deficiencies ranging from partial sight to blindness. An individual who is virtually handicapped,

her/his ability to see is affected, hindered, or completely lacking. The partially sighted are those who can read bodies of large print and who need magnifying devices. A partial sighted person has sufficient functional visual efficiency in such measure that vision rather than touch or hearing can be utilized as a chief avenue of learning, Taylor, Sternberg and Richards (1995: 1).

### **2.3 Global Analysis of Educational Provisions to the Blind or Visually Impaired Students**

Educational provision is granted for students with disabilities in all phases of education (i.e. right of access from Crèche to University). All students have the formal right to continue their studies via general or vocational pathways. According to a study by Ainscow, Booth & Dyson (2006:13), 99.5 per cent of students with inabilities are completely incorporated in mainstream education in Italy; very few countries in the world have such high inclusion rates. The explanation behind such practices are numerous and lie in the understanding that human, material and monetary assets should be apportioned to the education of understudies with disabilities to meet their special educational needs so as to advance value in educational modules access and results . For a considerable length of time, the educational community in developed countries has come to understand that, for understudies with disabilities, quality education implies getting to a type of educating in which they are incorporated into learning settings that have customarily served their standard associates alone.

College freshmen with Disabilities, (2001; p.15), postulate that each University in United States of America has the responsibility:

*“... to provide information to Faculty, staff, and students or guests with disabilities in accessible formats upon request. They are mandated to ensure that courses, programs, services and activities – when viewed in their entirety – are available in the most integrated and appropriate settings possible, evaluate students on their abilities, not their disabilities, provide or arrange for reasonable accommodations, and/or*

*academic adjustments for students with disabilities in courses, programs, services, jobs and activities, maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication, except where breaching confidentiality is permitted or required by law, or when the student requests that the information be shared.”*

The George Washington University as prescribed by Bailey, (2003) noticed that, any understudy looking for bolster services or facilities in light of his or her incapacity and data about the desired services, the post-secondary institution must provide those services or any sensible option. The understudy is not required to inform faculty or administrators within the post-secondary program about her incapacity whenever before or amid the application process. In any case, once admitted it turns into her obligation to inform the institution on the off chance that she or he need bolster. While choosing a postsecondary program-be it vocational, these understudies must consider whether and how that program best meets their interests, needs and preferences.

With respect to South Africa, Mushome, Avhasei and Monobe (2013;66) assert that “the Constitution of South Africa has abolished any form of discriminations. As result of this, anybody who qualifies to be admitted at a University should be admitted regardless of his/her physical condition, religion, gender or even background”. Having, said that it means that the University should prepare itself fully to accommodate any students with special educational needs. Preparations must be both physical (buildings and materials) and human (staff must be trained to deal with these students) problems.

In addition to pedagogical concerns, Mushome, Avhasei & Monobe (2013;67) further obtained that issues related to school environment are of importance to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities. However, there are still ongoing arguments on whether to adapt the environment to

suit the disadvantaged individuals. The reason behind adapting the environment for the individual is to ensure that the education system prepares for its students for an independent role in the wider society that makes few adaptations.

The Israel Equal Rights for people with Disabilities Law of 1998 is as of now being adjusted for advanced education establishments, while its regulations are as yet being written. The point of the law, comparatively to the ADA is accomplishing full incorporation for people with incapacities and announcing the privilege of individuals with disabilities to be equivalent individuals from society who ought to be approached with respect and bolster (Vilchinsky and Findeler, (2004) . In the interim, advanced education foundations are composing incapacity procurement into their policies and gaining ground in the areas of facilities and support services for understudies with disabilities, however their fundamental accentuation is on taking care of individual issues, which happen because of disabilities, as opposed to rolling out basic improvements in the institution to incorporate understudies with disabilities, change their way of life and promote universal design principles.

Mbugua et al (2012) Governmental Policies toward Students with VI in Israel though higher education institutions are not committed to support students with VI, other governmental services, such as the National Insurance Institute of Israel, and the Service for the Blind, do have policies that define the rehabilitation program for which people with VI are eligible. In order to be eligible for a rehabilitation program the individual has to go through a process which ultimately defines his/her eligibility for funding and support services (such as tutoring/ reading hours), the process begins with an evaluation and assessment of the functioning level of the

individual. According to these, a rehabilitation program is constructed jointly by the rehabilitation worker and the person with VI.

The situation related to the provision of essential hospitality to the disabled at various learning institutions the world over is not a new phenomenon. After realizing that the visually impaired students were proving their concerns wrong through their performance and contribution in class during lectures and discussions, this study stands to advocate for the provision of inclusive education to university, with considerable investments in human and material resources to support it visually impaired students, and to provide specialized lecturers that work to support inclusive education in regular teaching settings as supported by (Gravestock, 2001, p. 1). From the analysis of related literature on how other countries are managing the inclusion of disabled students in the learning settings, this study has tried to fill a geographical gap focusing on Zimbabwe, as most of these studies have been conducted in developed and developing countries as highlighted.

#### **2.4 Standard Educational Resources for the Visually Impaired**

Chauke (2002, p. 4) “Students with visual impairments have unique learning needs that must be addressed if they are going to graduate ready for further education, employment and/or independent living”.The use of assistive technology by visually impaired students in their academic work and information seeking has been studied by several authors who found out that technology plays an important role in the information behavior of visually impaired persons (Corn & Wall, 2002).

Disability Accommodations and Success Strategies (DASS) team in America is the primary contact for all Southern Methodist University students with disabilities. This office assists students with disabilities to effectively utilize resources they may need and helps them work with professors and staff in obtaining appropriate and reasonable accommodations. DASS is dedicated to providing an equal opportunity to participate in the University's curriculum, programs, and activities. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, DASS will evaluate and accommodate those students who are significantly impacted by a condition that is considered disabling. This includes learning disabilities, physical disabilities, psychiatric disorders and others, Southern Methodist University (2000).

## **2.5 The Extent to Which Visually Impaired Students Needs Are Addressed**

A number of institutions in developed countries have flexible regulation systems necessary for the smooth learning of all students regardless of ability or disability. They allow their lecturers to provide notes to their students on computer disk for the blind and the partially sighted students and those whose lecturers are not word-processed may agree to make their notes available (Students Support Service, 2002, p. 1). Various institutions in developed countries have adaptable control frameworks fundamental for the smooth learning of all students regardless of ability or disability. They permit their lecturers to give notes to their understudies on computer disk for the visually impaired and the partially sighted students and those whose lecturers are not word-processed may consent to make their notes accessible (Students Support Service, 2002, p. 1).

There is no point in setting up a University and then starving it of the necessary means of support (Matiru, Mwangi, & Schlette, 1995, p. 22). But, there is a lack of awareness in the student population. Able students need also to be educated and be able to know and understand how they can help visually impaired students if necessary. They must be workshops and humanly related campaigns, which would be able to highlight the needs of visually disabilities (Kirk, Gallagher, & Anastasiow, 1993, p. 376). Researches indicated that blind and partially sighted students reported that there is lack of awareness by the lecturing staff of their needs to make sure that all written material used during the lectures were clearly referred to by lecturers verbally. Many visually impaired students stressed the need to have access to the same equipment both on campus and at home in order to work effectively (Student Support Services, 2002, p. 3).

In Croatia a pilot study was launched in 2013 by Silvana and Tanacković (2013) noted that they obtained substantial help and support in their educational experiences and information searching processes, from their colleagues, teachers and librarians. In most cases, teachers provide them with (teaching) materials in electronic format, they arrange for them to take the exams in the time and in the form that suits them best (e.g. they are given more time to complete tests, they can take oral exam instead of the written one or they enlarge the font of the text in the exam and many more).

The George Washington University (2003) regarding to the Services, students who read Braille can order translations of print materials from a volunteer Braille service, the American Printing House for the Blind (for textbooks), or the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at the Library of Congress (for recreational materials organizations

mentioned.) . This indication that visually impaired students are being provided with the necessary resources.

Zimba, Mowes and Naanda (2007:14) noted that the visually impaired students faced many challenges in their learning in higher and tertiary institutions to support the ideas, the problems faced by the visually impaired students contributes more impacts in teaching and learning which usually resulted to poor or low performance. A report published by National Association of Societies for the Care of Handicapped (NASCOH, 2006) cited in (Gondo & Gondo, 2013), the visually impaired students were the most disadvantaged students and experienced the most challenges in accessing education.

The reflections drawn from the analysis shows that in most developed countries there is considerable realization that the needs of the visually impaired students have been taken note of as there are enough resources and awareness related to their welfare. This study seeks to draw its focus in Zimbabwe and evaluate the extent to which the needs of the visually impaired students are being addressed.

## **2.6 The Challenge in Lack of Educational Academic Materials**

Lack of Assistive Technology and Specialized Learning Materials is a challenge when it comes to the effective learning of the disabled. Dell, Newton & Petroff (2008) described assistive technology as any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of an individual with disabilities. Examples of assistive technology included but not limited to the following: text telephone, Braille machine, keyboard, slate and stylus, magnetic chess board, speech recognition computer software and other software like



voice fingers, freedom scientific JAWS, free and open source alternative ORCA and many more.

William (1996:402) asserts that “ Braille and large prints are the primary means of literacy to people who are visually impaired” notwithstanding, most of the universities with disability resources centers especially in a country like Zimbabwe are not likely to provide enough learning materials which in Braille as the first means of literacy, thus result to as a challenge to the visually impaired students, since without those assistive technology no effective education for visually impaired students.

Besides that, some of the Braille books are not up to date Chapararushe (2010) to further reinforce the point above, using out dated Braille books as means of communication students are being challenged in such a way that the information access are not of the same with the sighted students meaning some information are missed and it does not means examinations will be differ. This can force students to opt for other secondary resources as sources of information which hindered their time management in terms of paying attention to their Braille books. Chinyoka (2011), argued that, “Braille requires more space and its more bulky and expensive than print material to produce.

According to the carried research in Zimbabwe, Scholl (1987) emphasized the need for adapted additional equipment like Braille writers, Braille computers, talking calculators for blind children and enlarged print material for children with low vision. Regarding problems faced by teachers, it was noted that failure to receive relevant equipment made it difficult for teachers to give

feedback to students. Failure to interpret diagrams affected effective teaching and learning, especially in subjects like science and geography.

This research study stands to advocate for the provision of updated educational materials that supports and enhance the proper learning of the disabled group of students which comprise the visually impaired students. This research has realized that the absence of lack of Assistive Technology and Specialized Learning Materials, will pose for mere or lack of understanding to students thus advocates for the provision of such related technologies, as supported by (Scholl, 1986:17) who stressed the need for such materials for effectively updated learning environments.

## **2.7 Challenges in Lack of Competent Specialized Personnel**

Teaching and other staff are some of the most important resources needed to support the education of students with disabilities. In Italy, student–teacher ratios have consolidated over the years and have typically hardly been above 2: 1 at all phases of education. Support staff with specialized training should be allocated to schools at the rate of one teacher for every two students ascertained as needing support. The study conducted by Mutasa et al (2013) indicated that the programme coordinators were willing to support them students at educational institutions, but were not familiar with Braille and signing skills. This challenge could be attributed to the education system itself. This was because, in spite of the development made, it failed in providing the necessary requirements such as the Braille and embosser machines and competent personnel with Braille and embossing skills. Chinyoka (2011:12) lamented that, “lack of lecturers’ expertise lead to the use of negative language which is damaging to the visually

impaired students.” As stated by Chauke (2002) , Africa's training facilities were still meager and with a lot of personnel skill awaiting training.

A research carried out in Zambia,Penda, Ndhlovu&Kasonde (2015),discovered that, there is a problem of teaching learners with visual impairment in the teaching fraternity. Theproblem is lack of using appropriate experienced teachersfor the teaching ofthe visually impaired students. As Sight Saver International, (2010) explained, low academic performance of learners with visual impairment resulted from using the teaching method for learners with sight. This problem has caused poor classroom participation and performance among learners with visual impairment who end up with low education levels. Penda, Ndhlovu & Kasonde (2015),furthered saying thatteachers had difficult when they were using traditional teaching methods such as the question and answer method,which needs quick feedback.

Penda, Ndhlovu & Kasonde (2015), findings urges schools topropose school based training in order to equip teachers with necessary skills especially those were handling learners with visual impairment in their classes.teachers were faced with challenges when they used expository method in the fact that teachers had difficult on how to help learners with visual impairment perform well and not lag behind academically and the difficult to explain drawings on the board and pictures.

Kenya also lacks professionals in the area of special education in general (Karugu, 1994).Absence of sufficient number of trained work force for understudies with visual impairments presents snags to productive overhauling of the population. Kauffman et al (2003)

concur that, when teaching learners with visual impairment the teacher should use raised materials such as tactile drawings and pictures because un-raised materials such as graphical pictures is of no value and help to these type of learners.

Penda, Ndhlovu & Kasonde (2015), discovered that it's difficult for the teacher to make learners with visually impaired active participants during the lesson. Stainback & Stefanich(2014)found out that learners with visual impairment can participate actively in the lesson if teachers involve and train them to use their imaginations and ideas creatively Regarding the availability of adequate special educational materials and equipment in University of Gondar, Ethiopia, Brucker (2014)obtained that although it has abacus, slate and stylus, tape recorder and text books it is not adequate to provide the service needed for these students and most of the time students use the resource room as a library to read their text books and to do additional activities in their free time. Regarding students' access to library service, they have said that there are no reference materials written in Braille and other supportive materials in the library. Therefore students do not use library and instead they use the resource room as a library, ( Brucker ,2014).

## **2.8Lack of Conducive Physical Educational Environment**

School climate is the superlative in such that conducive environments it helps the visually impaired for the effective teaching and learning process. The physical environment (classroom layout and appearance, classroom arrangement, furniture arrangement etc) contribute a lot to promote active-learning method. As per Lipsky (2012), the physical environment in a classroom can challenge dynamic learning.Mandaba (2015) affirms that the unavailabilityof physical

environment and infrastructure was another test that upset those with visual impairments from getting to education facilities.

The study carried out at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) by Mutasa, Goronga & Tafangombe (2013) mourned the inaccessibility of the offices, classrooms, dining halls and libraries. They said that initially there were built without the exceptional students in mind. They further said some of the upper floors and centers were not accessed by elevators. The visually impaired students had to use the stairways to reach these floors. The greater part of these understudies discovered this issue a noteworthy test in the way that the stairs would be hard to explore without help with the nonattendance of other sighted schoolmate.

Lipsky (2012) castigates that the physical environments have remained a major challenge to the movement of visually impaired students at tertiary institutions. Chiparaushe (2010:2) notes that ‘the visually impaired students are not communicated to them, further cars parked in undesignated areas, obstacles such as chairs left on their path, open doors in corridors presented every day challenges in their mobility’’. Besides to the information above, a research carried out at Zimbabwe Open University, Chikukwa and Chimbwanda (2013) in terms of accessing to the information reported that all the students agreed that they felt left out by the way institutions communication system notices were written and pasted on notice boards of departments, faculties administration offices in print. No effort is made to inform students with visual impairment what is on the notices. This at times affected the students to miss on changed times of programmes courses.

Research conducted at University of Gender in Ethiopia by Stainback and Stefanich(2014)concerning the conduciveness of the physical environment for the teaching learning process reported that the compound is not suitable enough for students who uses wheelchair and students with visual impairment and this may have significant impact in the teaching learning process. The reports also claimed that the narrowness of the compound might affect the mobility of the students because it is crowded by students. With the literature related to the provision of suitable learning environments, this study maintains the views of other scholars for institutions to provide necessary environments for learners. This study proposes the creation of highly specialized educational environments or centre's, with developed methods of inclusion and teaching laboratories, that act as resource centre's and as bridges to mainstream education.

## **2.9Lack of Stand-by Health Care Facilities**

Visually impaired students in most of Universities in developing countries have failed to established information pertaining to health care, resulting from the lack of Braille printed papers for the visually impaired to access to such information .Chinyoka (2009) is of the opinion that there is no Braille literature available to those with visually impaired in hospitals whereas, the sighted access health information disseminated through pamphlets in the hospitals.Besides that, Paul (2000:72) asserts that a blind eye may develop chronic pains for the variety of reasons, to the extent that the learning process of visually impaired students can be hindered by such illness. This research seeks to draw attention the responsible authorities to be able to have stand-by heath care facilities and personnel's within the parameters of these groups of disabled students.

## **2.10Chapter Summary**

One of the key elements to achieving an equitable education for all is to develop policies and effective monitoring systems that can provide accountability for the education being offered to all children and can communicate progress in the context of national and international comparisons. In pursuant of these goals, this study in summary sought to address issues related to provision of considerable investments in human and material resources to support it, curricular agreements exist among public institutions such as schools, local health authorities and local public. Authorities, specialized teachers work to support inclusive education in regular classroom settings and conducive learning environment. The next chapters will forces to the research methodology, research instrument and data correction .

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

Relating to the fundamental research studies, this chapter presents the research methodology that was applied during the process of data collection. The chapter specifies and justifies the choices of research design, research instruments and primary and secondary sources of data that were employed in gathering data and their administration.

### **3.1 Research Design**

A research design is the specific data analysis techniques or methods that the researcher intends to use (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2003: 271). Latif and Maunganidze (2004:89) argued that, not that research design is the key to obtain valid and reliable information for decision making which is the most important purpose. This includes the discussion of steps to be taken in order to safeguard validity or authenticity of the finding. Latif and Maunganidze (2004:89) contend that, not that research design is the key to get legitimate and solid data for decision making which is the most vital reason. This incorporates the discussion of steps to be taken so as to protect legitimacy or realness of the finding.

The researcher used descriptive research design, Best et al (1993:16) cited in vasco (2014:23) says that the descriptive survey describes what is concerned with conditions that exists, opinions that are held, processes that are going on , effects that are evident or trends that are developmental. Chiromo (2009), descriptive survey research enable the researcher to explore the



research of the naked eye, meaning to say the descriptive research assisted the researcher in obtaining in depth information on or over and beyond. The research employed methods and techniques involving interviews, observations and questionnaires of data collected by the researcher during fieldwork. These were used to investigate the behavior, perspectives, feelings and experiences of the visually impaired students.

### **3.2 Population**

Schaeffer, Merdanhall and Ott (1979) describe a population as all members of any well-defined group of people, events or objects to be studied or the target group. In this study the targeted population accommodated (20) participants which included the whole numbers of visually impaired students, whole numbers of workers at the Disability resources Center (DRC) and (10) of the lecturers teaching visually impaired students in Midlands State University in Gweru district. The idea behind this population was to ensure data triangulation.

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Methods**

A sample is a “subset of a population” as put across by Wiley and Sons (2010: 100).Ragin, (1987),define sampling as the process of selecting a number of individuals (a sample) from a population preferable in such a way that, the individuals are representative of the large group from which they were selected. The researcher targeted the sample size of (6) workers at the DRC,( 4) visually impaired students and ( 10) lecturers.

Purposive sampling was used to come up with a dignified sample size. Chiromo (2009) says that purposive sampling involves the researcher handpicking the cases to be included in the sample.

To select the six (6) workers at the Disability Resources Centers, the researcher chose them upon their basis training they received in working with the visual impairment students and lecturers were chosen according to certain characteristics. This was done so, because they were better positioned to speak well to the research needs.

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

One key element in conducting useful research is gathering reliable data using relevant research instruments. Kulbir (1984:49) views research instruments as tools for collecting data and information. The researcher used more than three instruments or triangulation which are the observation, interview and questionnaire, which helped the researcher to minimize the weakness of using one single approach.

#### **3.4.1 Participant Observation**

Observation is one way to collect primary data, in other word is a direct means of studying people is one of the extremely methods for obtaining understanding data through the eyes of the photographer in qualitative research. Kumar (2005:55) observation is a purposeful, systematic, and selective ways of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place. The researcher intended to observe a group in its natural operation rather than interviewing in its activities which is observation under natural condition, this helped the researcher to discover in reality on the ground in term of teaching and learning in a regular classes and extracurricular activities such as sport, by using this instrument this provided a deep insights into the interaction.

Observation also enabled the researcher to obtain the actual and more reliable information about the challenges the visually impaired students face without fear of false information that could be given by respondents. Thus the researcher was part and parcel of the sports activities at MSU gym hall. However, Bell (2005), concurs that problems of the past cannot be studied by means of observation as well as respondents' views and opinions, so for the reliability and validity of the study the researcher will employ other instruments.

### **3.4.2. Questionnaire**

According to Kumar (2005) questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by the respondents. It is that form of inquiry, which contains a systematically compiled and organized series of questions that are sent to the population samples, Chiromo (2009). The researcher administered the questionnaire to the lecturers teaching visually impaired students, and gave them time to express their views and opinions openly without fear, this is because it is anonymity, meaning to say no form of identification, no name in questionnaire as well as confidentiality, no influence by the researcher because the respondents were not in the presence of the researcher. However questionnaires are not suitable for questions which require probing to obtain adequate information. Thus the researcher used the interview as an instrument of gathering data and information from the VIS and workers at the DRC for the reliability and validity of the study.

### **3.4.3 Interviews**

Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind participants' experiences. (Chiromo 2009: 26), in other words interview is the way of collecting data face-to-face with the researcher

and the interviewee. Interviews were very important to this research because it was the appropriate or best way to interact and generate ideas with the VIS in terms of time saving. The researcher created interviews guide for the sample to elicit oral response from the interviewees. Voice recorder was used.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedures**

Procedures and regulations are the most vital to the researcher for the respect and order. At the outset, supervisor bestowed the researcher a permission for the introductory letter from the Department of Applied Education and then afterwards the researcher requested permission from the university Registrar to carry out a research in Midlands State University as granted by the university then the researcher proceeded to the Disability Resources Center, lecturers' as well as visually impaired students for the appointment of the data collection.

The researcher conducted Personal face to face (interview) with 4 visually impaired students, 6 workers at the DRC, the researcher also administered the questionnaires to 10 lecturers and collected them according to the agreement date. Besides that the researcher also observed on the physical environment around the university, sport activities as a extracurricular activities as well in the resources rooms for example computer lab and library. The researcher gave codenames to the participants according to their categories for instance students were named from number 1-4, workers from letter A-F and lecturers from capital letter (A) and small letter (a) **Aa –Jj**

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Ethics impacts on all forms of research. In this research all interviewees and other informants were told of a set of moral principles that guided the researcher's views on confidentiality, anonymity, legality, professionalism and privacy in conducting research. With the sensitivity of the study area which focuses on human subjects and their behavior, especially aspects of disabled student's performance in learning, the interviewees were assured of professionalism and confidentiality. When I attended the interview at their centre, I decided not to use a video camera since it was not going to offer a true reflection of what was taking place. The research interviews were conducted after initially obtaining the interviewee's explicit permission through the signing of consent forms. I ascertained the schedule of people's routines so that the interviewees were not disturbed in their daily routines to answer questions, but were interviewed when and if they were free to do so. Confidentiality was also respected; I became an observer in a more formal sense. The biggest moral lesson I learnt as a participant observer was that, you should be discreet enough about who are you and what you are doing do not disrupt people's happiness and their normal activity, yet you should be open enough that ,the people you observe and interact with do not feel that your presence compromises their privacy.

### **3.7 Data analysis plan**

Vasco (2014) refers to data analysis as the ordering and structuring of data to provide knowledge. Kumar (2005) refers data analysis as encompassing the establishment of categories, the application of categories to raw data through coding, tabulation and drawing statistical inferences. Description of open-ended questions, structured interviews, participants observer and

statistical expression, tabular and graphs presentation for closed- ended questions was used, the researcher grouped the similar answers from the interviews and observation.

### **3.8 Chapter Summary**

The chapter examined in detail the research design, data collection methods, instrument of data collection, population and sample as well as data analysis methods which were used in the collection of information related to the visually impaired students at Midlands State University. The next chapter will pay attention to the data presentation, analysis and discussion of the research project.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

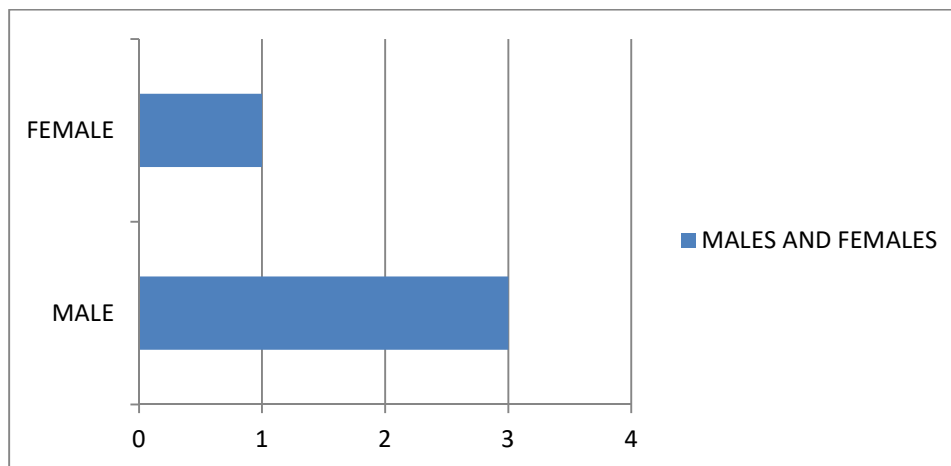
#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter draws attention to the presentation, analysis and discussion, of data collected on the challenges faced by the visually impaired students at Midlands State University. The researcher used the triangulation method of data collection in this study. Triangulation is defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of certain aspects of human behavior. The use of different methods (triangulation) in a research project helps to provide different perspectives on the research topic (Chari 2007:37). The case study of Midlands State University was chosen, on the basis of it a closer location and a best example of a learning environment which considers the enrolment of students with disabled challenges. Research instruments (interviews, questionnaires and participant observation) were administered upon the visually impaired students, workers at Disability Resources Center (DRC) and lectures teaching visually impaired students. The data were presented as well as analyzed in line with the research questions. Quantitative data were statistically presented in form of pie charts, graphs and tables while qualitative data were analyzed inductively and deductively.

*[Section A-The following responses were drawn from the students, workers of DRC and observations made by the researcher.]*

#### 4.1 Accessibilities of Conducive Learning Environment

Provision in separate specialized learning classrooms is of great importance for the overall performance of the visually impaired students. Even though there is full inclusion into University education, regular classroom settings at MSU still proved to be a major challenges relating from the responses obtained through the interviews conducted on four students from the DRC centre. The **Fig 1** below shows the sex distribution from the responses drawn. From a rather general close ended question drawn from the questionnaire all the students confidently condemned the nature of the classroom after being asked if the classrooms were accessible for proper learning, as shown on **Table 1** respectively.



**Figure 1 Sex Distribution**

*In this study (4) students participated, in which (3) were males and (1) female as shown in the table above*



**Table 1 Are the classrooms accessible for you?**

<b>Student Classification</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Student 1		√
Student 2		√
Student 3		√
Student 4		√

All the four students concurred that the available classrooms allocated to their learning were not accessible for them; this was supported by the following statements:

**Student 2.** “ Here at MSU it’s very difficult to get to see the difference between a classroom specifically build for us and those without any disability...it’s all the same, and the way they are distributed is a problem since we have to walk from class to class, and on our way we meet ignorant fellow students who sometimes fails to recognize our inability challenges...it’s so uncomfortable”

Prior to the comment that was received from Student 2, another student showed discomfort in the distance that exists within the allocated learning space. Below was the statement that was drawn from the student;

**Student 4**“...the arrangement of the classroom is not in order , meaning classrooms are far from each other for example from great hall to multipurpose hall or to new classrooms or to room 45 which is up stair which is not easy to get there alone in the absence of my assistance”.

The findings above concur with Bhagwati, J (2011) who said that most institutions fail to provide educational facilities in separate settings, and specialized centres for the disabled.

From the direct observation carried by the researcher, some areas had trenches and protruding tree roots. The pathway had uncovered trenches which were dangerous to the visually impaired students especially those who would shift to attend lectures at the Multi-Purpose Hall (MPH). Besides that another researcher Mutasa et al (2013 cited in Moses M (2015) stated that some of the offices and lecture rooms were on upper floors and not accessed by elevators making them inaccessible to the visually impaired students. The visually impaired students had to use the stairways to reach these floors.

Responses drawn from the Workers at the DRCs' were summarized and stressed that the University was still to build students ' toilet at the DRC, had to make sure there are properly light streets between DRC and the Uhuru hostel where mostly the visually male VIS allocated to stay. Moreover they emphasized on the need for additional supporting staff or specialist instructors to cater for the demands of the DRC students, to acquire specific materials especially textbooks, and add more Braille machines and should always make sure that the administration office is alert on the special needs which are available to meet the needs for the visually impaired students pertaining to their faculty.

To support the above findings the researcher observed that accessibility is a major concern as they are to move from place to place, and the some of the roads are risky accident zones. The researcher also observed that, at night the visually impaired students are totally fixed at one point, as moving from their hostel to the library would need an assistant. The campus environment is dark, there are only few street light not at many points, in such that their movement from place to place is restricted.

The rapid growth of the University as new buildings are being built; offices are changed day in and out without their alert. The researcher also found out that between new administration and MPH there are construction of new buildings , movements of trucks during the day , became a quite challenge to the researched students to move around in such environment, on top of that the University has got a pathway or road passed between Eco cash Agent office and the ZB bank outlet, upto Fletcher High School which has made road inaccessible for both students either able or disabled due to the fact that the road is thin and congested with fast moving vehicles, hence students are extremely at risk of accident related incidents.

#### **4.2 Up to date Learning Resources and Materials**

Drawing from the data gathered from the interviews conducted to visually impaired students, the following responses were drawn from the open –ended questions.

**Student2:** *‘the issues of researching, normally when we are given an assignment questions we will be expected to go and make research and then it is difficult because here at DRC we don't have history text books in Braille, I only rely on notes given by lecturers or researching on internet and then in the case of using our computers I'm not that good in Google since we only started using those computers recently. I definitely need someone to assist me to come up with an up to standard research’*

**Student 4 ;** *Here at MSU I think most of our lecturers specifically those teaching Human Resources have little or no skills experienced about teaching people like me in terms of reading Braille , because I can remember the time I was in level 1.1 doing accounting , I had experienced some challenges in the sense that there was more calculations and drawings whereby , my lecturer was not aware of that when it comes to calculations and drawings with Braille machine its quite challenging , more time is required when it comes to calculations and drawings and the Braille machine I used cannot draw accounting Colum , due to the fact that, the way he taught accounting he did not consider the uses of my Braille machine , in which sometimes I got nothing during the lesson ‘*

Chorumas' (2007) findings tended support to the claim that the visually impaired students faced challenges in accessing learning resources in their modes of literacy such as Braille and large print, further more the data yielded by this study provides strong evidence that as the researcher observed in the resources rooms and library there are no enough textbooks and most of the textbooks are not there at all. Along similar lines, Costello (2014) argues that the visually impaired students would need extra time to spend on making material accessible. This significantly delayed the visually impaired students in completing reading or writing their assignments. Thereby, disallowing the visually impaired to maximize their potential. The interviews pointed out also that, the researched students have also challenges in accessing reading materials.

Kiarie (2014) suggest that obstacles also exist in the area of adaptations of materials for students with visual impairments. Although some subjects such as Biological Sciences, Home Science, Geography, and Mathematics, studied in the Secondary Schools have syllabi adapted for students with visual impairments in which complex psychomotor activities are replaced by more manageable ones (Waihenya, 2000), most syllabi used in general education classes do not have accommodations in terms of adapted activities for students with visual impairments. This makes it extremely hard for students with visual impairments to access the general education curriculum, to support this.

#### **4.3 Requisite Skilled Personnel's**

Teaching and other staff are some of the most important resources needed to support the education of students with disabilities. research observed by URT, in 2008 current general

teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and skills of teaching inclusive classrooms and handling students with special educational needs to support the study, have a strong evidence as indicated by lecturers in such that without a formal training in special needs education on how to handle the visually impaired students is quite challenging. A student had this to say prior to the availability of skilled staff;

**Student 3,** *“Sometimes you can see that your lecturers are even struggling to make the best for us, they lack the knowledge patterning on how to relate with disable students, they find it difficult to explain... actually some of lecturers are too fast when it comes to taking notes they can forget that there is someone who is taking notes with a Braille machine so they don't follow my case when it comes to taking notes.”*

**Student 2,** *–“teacher ratios at this institution are way off...imagine one lecture servicing more than 100 students in a single lecture...sometimes it becomes difficult for the lecturer to understand all the problems faced by the students...we advocate for lectures that can stand to dwell on studies primarily for the visually impaired.*

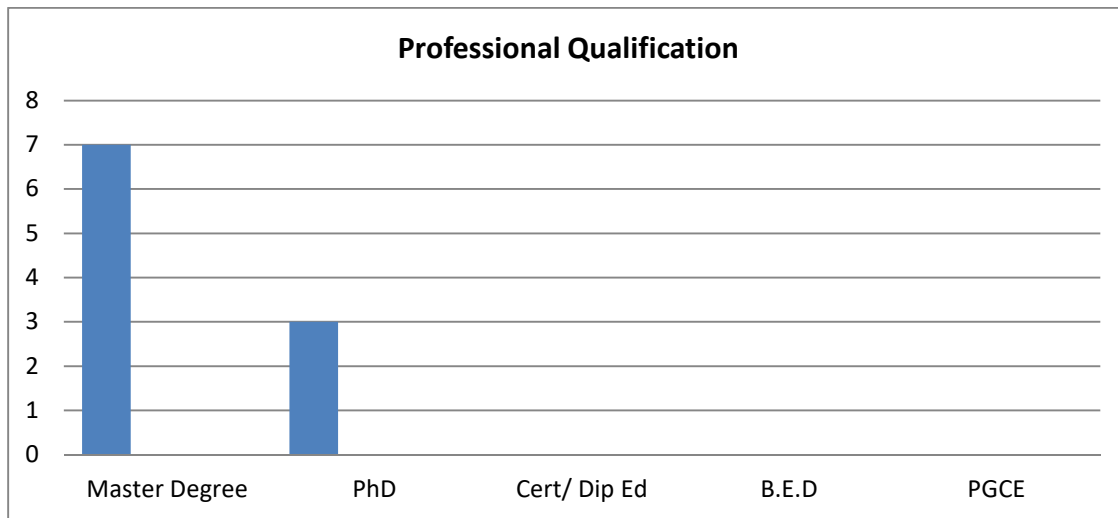
The responses received indicated the need for specialized staff of special needs and to also factor in the issue of lecturer-student ratio, so as to accommodate the disadvantaged visually impaired students.

#### **4.4 Provision of Health Environment and Materials**

For children with disabilities, as for all children, a healthy educational environment is vital. Educational institutions of all levels should promote health and well-being, dignity and respect, creating pleasant, comfortable spaces for all. This means considering school life from the perspective of the students in order to get accessible personal care facilities, provided at convenient intervals around the institutions as supported by the Building Bulletin 102, ( n.d). With respect to healthy matters, as student shared the pros and cons the University had offered;

**Student 3** *'Hall of resident the bath rooms and toilets meant for the disabled are always in a mess as sometimes ruddy students use them leaving them in a bad state. However we appreciate that the university it takes most of the things into consideration in the fact that the university provides the Librarianship, those provide information resources to people with disability and make sure that every piece of information pertaining health services; have reach visually impaired students as well as other students.*

**[Section B** *The following data was drawn from ten (10) lecturers teaching visually impaired in MSU from different departments]*



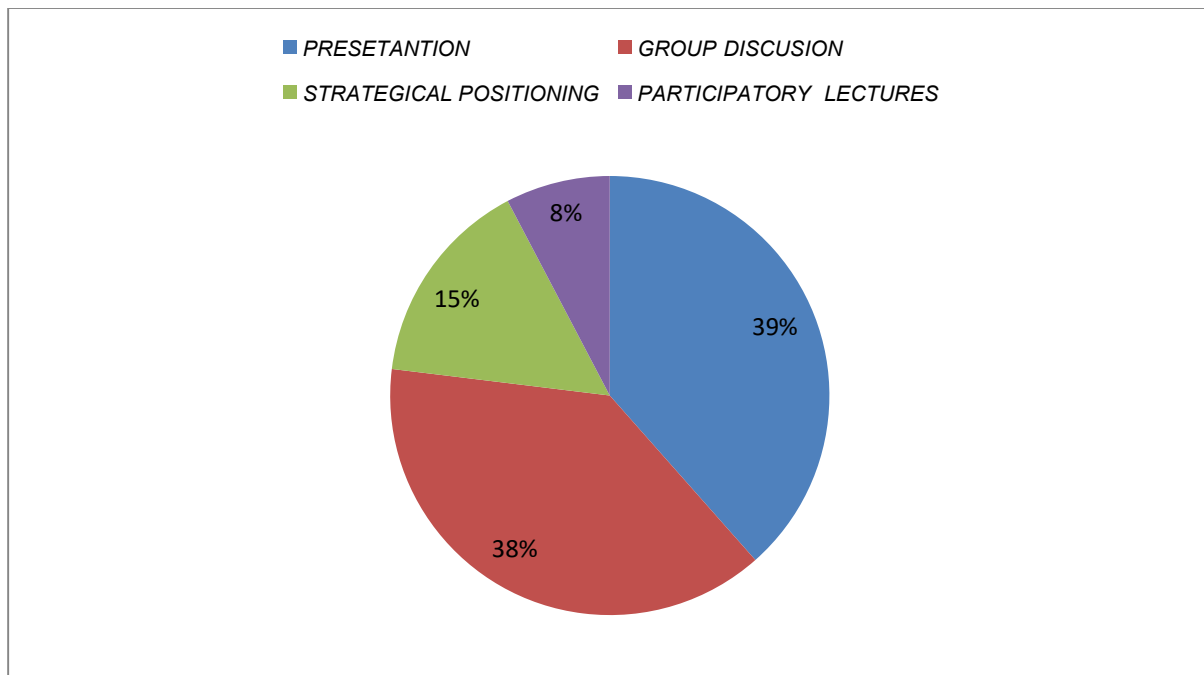
**Figure 2** *Qualifications of the lecturers, teaching visually impaired students*

7/10 of lecturers engaged were Master Degree in Education holders while 3/7 held PhD in Education. Although lecturers indicated their professional experience, it did not make any relevance for the effective teaching and handling of special needs students since the majority of lecturers did not attend any training in Special Needs Education.

Most of the lecturers did not attend any formal training in special need education, this information was obtained from lecturers' questionnaires responses, workers at the DRC and

students' interviews. The same was also highlighted the same issue, meaning that the issues of lack of expertise on how to handle VIS is due to the lack of trained experts in the University. The most interesting approach to this issue was the survey conducted by the Kenya Institute of Special Education in 1989 revealed that up to 50% of teachers working with students with disabilities were untrained in the field. Although it has been about twenty years since this study was conducted, the field continues to experience a dire need for trained professionals. (Kiarie 2014)

#### 4.5 Teaching Strategies Commonly Used to Address the Needs of Students with Special Need In Regular Class.



**Figure 3 Teaching strategies commonly used by lecturers**

As follows from the figure shown above 8% of participatory lectures, 15% strategically positioning, 38% group discussion and 39% presentation have been used mostly by the lecturers

to address the needs of students with special needs in regular class. On top of that, lecturer Ff, Gg, Hh, Ii and Jj indicated that:

*‘Providing notes in Braille from DRC, strategically positioning them in class, and make sure that they sits in the front row to assist hearing, Use of audio-recording devices are the superlative and commonly strategies used ‘.*

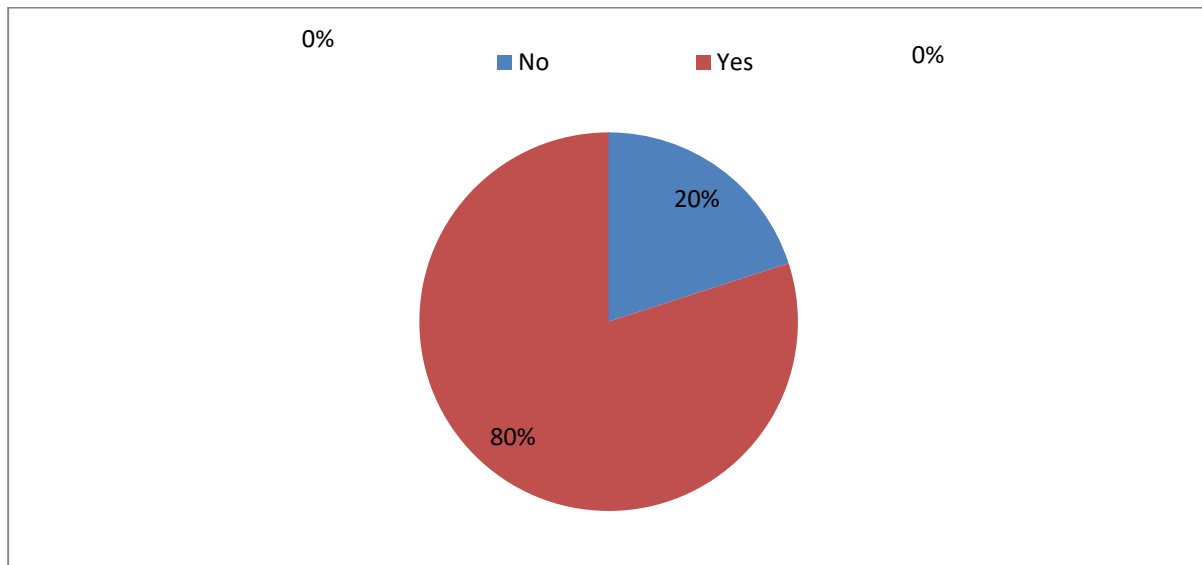
This entails that all students, regardless of any form of differences, should enjoy the provision of the national curriculum and be educated like others (Garner & Davies, 2001). It remains that; students in inclusive classrooms have different learning needs because of different backgrounds and experiences (Johnsen, 2001). These differences and diversities should be acknowledged, and attempts should be made to make use of these differences in order to meet their needs through preparing conducive learning and teaching environments (Johnsen, 2001; UNESCO, 1994). This should be done because every student, regardless of how different he or she is, has the right to be educated like other students, as advocated in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on special needs education access and quality cited by Josua (2013)

*...all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangement, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities (UNESCO, 1994, p.11).*



#### 4.6 Is there additional time for visually impaired students to do their activities in regular class?

80% of lecturers give additional time for the visually impaired students to do their activities in regular class, the following are the responses drawn from the open-ended questions conducted to lecturers.



**Figure 4** is there additional time for visually impaired students to do their activities in regular class?

**LecturerEe**, exemplify that...

*“additional time is imperative as they need to transcribe some activities into Braille especially class activities , although I cannot read what they may be writing at that moment because there is need for translation first from Braille paper into black and white paper thus , extra time is not extremely necessary during the lesson because of limited time allocated”*

**LecturerBb** said that...

*“ I don't really give extra time in regular class , but constantly check if they are following .*

**Lecturer Dd** further indicated that...

*“Where necessary yes. Otherwise the VIS is asked to have lecture materials put on Braille by the specialist at the DRC to enable the students to study the information I also welcome the visually impaired student at any time in my office if he or she has questions or needs clarification on issues covered” the rest responses are in line with the above statements. More so the above findings are in line with what the researcher observed in which 1 hour lecture can make it difficult for lecturers to give extra time to visually impaired students to do their class activities during regular class.*

#### **4.7 What problems do you have in catering for the needs of the visually impaired students in the classroom?**

**Lecturers Aa, Cc, Dd, Ee, Gg, Ff, and Hh,** responses were and summarized to say that:

*...Without a formal training in Special Needs Education on how to handle the visually impaired students, how to read and write something in a Braille form as a lecturers teaching VIS is quite challenging. Suspension of illustrating something on white board or chalkboard and issues of printing handouts, reduce pace in their writing of notes so that they are up to date is also quite challenging during regular class”*

**Lecturer Cc** specifically specified that:

*“I have no problem in catering the needs of VIS in the classroom simple because I did a module on special education for my masters in education in the USA”.*

#### **4.8 Analysing and Evaluating Data**

Certain issues have emerged from this study which will stand to help improve the standards of learning for the VIS at Midlands State University. In light with the research demands this study have tried to uprootsome hidden issues that may have been ignorantly given a blind eye by

University administrators, staff and other students. However, this research doesn't aim to initiate a witch hunt but rather stands to advocate for the provision of better standards of learning for the VIS at MidlandsState University as much as other Universities are giving to theirSpecial Needs Students.

#### **4.9Chapter Summary**

In brief the chapter focused on data presentation, analysis and discussion, these have drawn from data obtained through questionnaires, interviews as well as observation, and these instruments was conducted from workers at DRC, visually impaired students and lecturers teaching visually impaired students. The researcher mostly concentrated on the key research question and is summarized it into two sections as follows: **Section 1.** Data drawn from the students, workers of DRC and observations made by the researcher and **Section 2**data drawn from ten (10) lecturers teaching visually impaired in MSU from different departments. This have been done according to the interviews and questionnaires questions thus ,the data obtained revealed that visually impaired students are the most disadvantages groups in the university compared to the sighted students , given these facts by the VIS that : the physical environment challenges , the study obtained that some areas had trenches and protruding tree roots especially from great hall to MPH and new classrooms , stairs to lecture room 45 , overclouded road mostly to the main gate all these had stated by the VIS . Beside that VIS also indicated Challenges posed by educational and Academic materials such as Problem with researching school's work for example assignments, inadequate resources such as textbooks furthermore, they indicated as well as health changes pertaining the neatness and unwise uses of bathrooms and toilets in their hostels by negligent sighted students. All in all the section 2 highlighted the Teaching strategies

commonly used by the lecturers teaching VIS to address the needs of students with special need in regular class inclusive classroom, the extra time given by the lecturer to the VIS as well as the problems they encountered during teaching in regular class. The next chapter will focus on summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

It was the purpose of this study to find out if visually impaired students at Midlands State University were facing similar challenges as students in Namibia at Secondary schools. The researcher aim was to find problems that are faced by the visually impaired students at Midlands State University. In the following conclusions the key findings of this research are summarized and recommendations made for future action to enable development, competitiveness and to mitigate challenges that are faced by the visually impaired students at MSU. This chapter focused on the summary, mapped out the conclusions of the research findings and recommendations made in order to map out the way forward on how to mitigate the challenges faced by the visually impaired students at MSU.

#### **5.1 Summary**

The study outlined the background of the study, briefly explained the statement of the problem, highlighted the research questions, the importance of the studies, delimitation, limitations and defined the terms used.

Much research on the challenges faced by the visually impaired students have been done, thus the researcher consulted many authors .More so,Chapter Two focused on literature review related on the challenges faced visually impaired at the higher institution such challenges outlined are in order of difficulty: The Challenge in Lack of Educational Academic Materials,

Challenges in Lack of Competent Specialized Personnel, Lack of Conducive Physical Educational Environment, and Lack of Stand-by Health Care Facilities.

In chapter 3 the researcher highlighted the research methodology in which the researcher employed descriptive survey design to investigate the challenges that face students with visual impairment in the university (MSU) .The researcher employed qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures through use of triangular instruments: the observation, interviews and questionnaires. The researcher targeted the population of 20 participants which also became a sample of, 4 visually impaired students 6 workers at the DRC and 10 lecturers, this because the population of visually impaired students and workers at the DRC are in a small numbers hence the researcher intended to use the whole group sampling and use purposive sampling for the lecturers teaching visually impaired students. Research procedures and data analysis highlighted as well. The research went on to chapter 4 which includes data presentation, analysis and discussion and chapter 5 highlighted the summary, discussion and recommendation drawn from the research's findings.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was intended to find out if visually impaired students at Midlands State University are facing similar challenges as students in Namibia at Secondary school. The researcher was also attempted to find solutions to the problems that are faced by the visually impaired students at Midlands State University, the followings are the conclusions drawn from participants' responses.

100% of the participants participated in the study, responded to the research questions have provided evidence that the disabled students ( VIS) at midlands state university are the most disadvantages students with numerous challenges which contributes to their academic performance, the findings of this case study conclude that although the university was not made for the disabled students since they are not the founder of this institution , yet the renovation and some of new buildings are of the same , for example the new administrations until today none of the visually impaired students knows offices in there this is because most of the offices are just up stars are of the same with some of the old buildings , besides that the research findings confirmed that the physical environment is not fully conducive to the disabled students which lead to mobility problem in the fact that areas had trenches and protruding tree roots , the pathway had uncovered trenches for instance footpath between *Wadzanai* hostels and *Rusununguko* hostels as indicated by the students on top of that the main road pathway is also narrow and overclouded by many different vehicles which may results to accidents.

The researcher also concluded that since there are inadequate learning resources such as textbooks, Braille and Perkins machines large printer, CCTV, few specialist instructors and inadequate sport facilities such as play ball field or training pitches, lack of proper training and trainers, perfect sound ball and many more, these are majors challenges that can hindered the smoothing learning and studies of the visually impaired students.

Furthermore from the outcome of the investigation it is possible to conclude that the liaison between the administration , Faculties and the DRC is not that strong. This is because the data obtained revealed that the university failed to provide the academic materials such as Braille

machine pertaining the needs of the visually impaired student's programs especially Braille machine to do with calculations and drawing .This was drawn from **Student 2** responses , doing Human Resources had experienced difficulty in accounting ,plus according to the data obtained from lecturer's questionnaires revealed that only one lecturer had formal training in special needs educations and the less 9 of them had not attended any formal training in special needs education thus lack expertise personnel lead to lecturer having some problems in handling visually impaired students as well as problem of marking preparation of teaching materials that suit the learning of students with visual impairments.

However, the university has also put into place some of the facilities and services, such as DRC, specific library and computer lab although there is no enough resources, even the new classrooms have also built put into mind the visual impairment when it come to the arrangement and stairs are not that long, students are access to information pertain health care, students are participating in sport and many more.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Since the research was on the case study in a specific University, it cannot be generalized to the entire inclusive higher institution in the whole country, therefore with the research's findings these recommendations are merely for the institution studied.

#### **5.3.1 Students' Recommendations**

- Firstly MSU should see to it that they have Improved on the area of books in Braille , there is needs for textbooks to be in Braille so that it will be easy and fair to all students



at MSU , the better way of doing this , MSU should recruit more specialists those are able to translate textbooks into Braille papers from the main library in bulk or collaborate with neighboring Universities in which they can borrow some books, by doing this , **student 2** “MSU will reduce big burden from us as well as from our assistance in the case of time saving in our studies ‘

- Secondly on the issue of the areas which is full of portals as well protrude roots, should see to it that those portals and protrude roots are covered so that it will be easy for disability students to walk or move around alone in the absence of the assistance.
- Thirdly the issues of lecture rooms, they should be not far away from each other, should re- arrange them and take into a serious consideration so that it will allow disabled students to walk alone in the absence of the assistance.

### **5.3.2 Lecturers’ Recommendations**

- Some long documents may need to be converted to audio books or documents for the purpose of VIS. This will make a better improvement and time –saving for lectures, students and the specialist instructor.
- Staff development sessions for main specially needs (education) specialist instructors.
- The university should offer short courses to lecturers or in-service training specifically in which they should be educated on how to make the classrooms inclusive to students with special needs education and visual impairments in particular, through adaptations of teaching and learning environments in polite ad logical manners.

### 5.3.3 DRC's Workers Recommendations

- The workers outlined that at DRC there are no toilets for disabled students therefore, the university should build students 'toilet at the DRC for the better service for both able and disable students.
- MSU Should place light street between DRC and Uhuru hostel which mostly the visually male VIS allocated
- Workers also indicated the overloading workers to the Specialist instructor who convert all documents into Braille papers either examination or other assessment tasks. In view of this workers recommended that the university should recruit one more specialist instructor at DRC
- The study showed that there is lack of learning material in Braille particularly: History textbooks books are not accessible, to CCTV and Braille machines. In this way, the research recommends the university to have a strong relationship with more no-governmental profits for the supporters and donations
- The study revealed that between the administration office, DRC and the faculties there is no strong liaison pertaining to the availability of resources and materials which are needed by the visually impaired students enrolled. Thus, the study recommends that the university ought to engage the administration officers that programs or field of studies are planned considering visual impaired students. By doing this, it will enhance teaching and learning for inclusion education within the university.
- The mobility problems due to the un-conducive physical environment within the university particularly the environment that expanding rapidly workers recommended that the university ought to have orientation and mobility expert in which are being trained to

teach students with visual impairments the concepts, skills and techniques that enable them to travel safe in the environment.

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## **APPENDIX A: Interview questions for students**

1. What program are you following?
2. What level are you?
3. Are the classrooms accessible for you?
4. Are you doing the same program as you applied for? If no please explain
5. What problems do lecturers have in catering for your needs in the classroom?
6. Does your faculty modify their teaching styles, giving out copies of their notes and spend extra time outside class?
7. How did you prepare yourself to benefit from lecture before enrolling at Midlands State University? Explain
8. What challenges are you facing in your studies and learning process?
  - i) List them in order of degree of difficulty?
9. Suggest solutions to the problems you have stated above.

**THE END**



## **APPENDIX B: Interview Questions for the Workers at Disability Resources**

### **Center (DRC) Workers**

- a) What is your area of specialization at the Disability Resources Center?
- b) Does the university offer formal training on special needs education?
- c) How does the University select, and assess the suitability of the potential students for effective teaching and learning at Midlands State University?
- d) To what extent does the university provide standard educational equipment for the visually impaired students?
- e) From your point of view, do visually impaired students face any challenges at MSU?  
Please support your answer.
- f) What do you suggest the University should do to respond to the challenges faced by the visually impaired students at MSU?

**THE END**

## APPENDIX C: Questionnaires for the Lecturers

My name is Aina Fillipus, a student at Midlands State University in the department of Applied Education ,doing a Bachelor of Education Degree in Management of Business, I am carrying out a research study on the challenges faced by the visually impaired students at Midlands State University, Zimbabwe, in Gweru , Urban District. The information I m gathering is merely for academic purposes and will be treated as confidential. I therefore kindly request you to answer the following questions truthfully. Thank you in advance.

- PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER
- INDICATE YOUR RESPONSE BY PUTTING A TICK ( ) IN THE APPROPRIATE BOXES PROVIDED.

### Section A: Demographic Data

1. Sex : Male  Female

2. Age : 20-25  26-31  32 and above

3. Professional qualification: Cert/Dip Ed  B.E.D  PGCE

Master Degree

Any other qualification (**Specify**).....

4. Have you attended formal training in special needs education?

Yes  No

If yes, **Specify:**

.....  
.....

5. Nature of visual impairment students you teach

Total blind  Partial blind  both

6. State teaching aids used during teaching process?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. What problems do you have in catering for the needs of the visually impaired students in the classroom?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Suggestions solution to problems stated above

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

THE END

**APPENDIXD: Research Letters**

Ms Aina Fillipus  
P O Box 2843  
Ondangwa  
22 February 2016  
Email:ndfillipus@gmail.com

The Registrar  
Private Bag 9055  
Gweru  
Zimbabwe



*Approved*  
*[Signature]*  
*Reg*  
*22/02/16*

Dear Sir

**RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I am Aina Fillipus, a level 4:2 student at Midlands State University (MSU) in the Department of Applied Education, doing a Bachelor of Education Honours Degree in Management of Business. The proposed topic of my research is: A study of the challenges faced by the visually impaired students at Midlands state University, Gweru, Urban district, Zimbabwe. This research will be conducted under the supervision of Mr Bwerazuva. Therefore, I am hereby seeking your consent to carry out my research in Midlands State University (MSU).

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

Aina Fillipus

